

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support, my strong support, for the Nation of Israel as it exercises its right to self-defense in the face of terrorist attacks.

I am sure my colleagues are aware that back on June 25th, members of the Hamas terrorist organization attacked an Israeli military post outside the Gaza Strip. Two Israeli soldiers were killed and another was captured. Israel responded to this clear act of war with appropriate force, seeking the return of its soldier and an end to rocket attacks coming from the Gaza Strip. The violence continued, though, with Gaza-based terrorists firing a rocket into a high school in the city of Ashkelon.

Many of Hamas' top leaders have advocated the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, including the Palestinian Foreign Minister, who said in March that Hamas should kidnap Israeli soldiers and exchange them for jailed Palestinian terrorists.

Of course, attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip were just the beginning. Last week, Hezbollah terrorists attacked Israeli soldiers in northern Israel, killing eight and kidnapping two. They also began firing rockets on northern Israeli towns, including Haifa, the third-largest city in the country.

Israel again responded to this act of war by seeking to defend themselves. They entered Lebanon in an attempt both to rescue the kidnapped soldiers and prevent Hezbollah terrorists from committing further acts against Israel. They also blockaded the country to prevent Iran and Syria from sending further supplies, arms, and terrorists into Lebanon to support Hezbollah's actions.

This weekend, however, with increasing attacks from Hezbollah, Israel officials are now warning civilians as far south as Tel Aviv to be on alert for rocket attacks. There is also word that Iranian Revolutionary Guard soldiers are in southern Lebanon, helping to train Hezbollah and equip them with new, longer-range missiles and rockets, so they can threaten more Israeli citizens.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, world leaders have not solidly backed Israel's right to self-defense. While the Bush administration expressed support for Israel's actions, support for our ally in the Middle East has not come from all corners. In fact, last week the European Union criticized Israel's response as "disproportionate." I would like to know what the EU would think if one of their member nations were attacked by terrorists and the U.S. referred to their response as "disproportionate."

The EU has also condemned Israel for its air and sea blockade of Lebanon. That blockade is necessary, however, because we know that otherwise Iran and Syria would continue to funnel more and more weapons and personnel into southern Lebanon.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday I wrote to the current EU president to express my

strong disapproval of the European Union's comments. I will include for the RECORD that letter.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that Israel has complied with international agreements, such as U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, by withdrawing from Lebanon. Unfortunately, the Lebanese Government has not held up its end of the bargain, failing to control southern Lebanon, rein in Hezbollah and support peace and security on their southern border, as required by Security Council Resolution 1559 from September 2004.

Hamas, meanwhile, called Hezbollah's actions "a heroic operation." Despite what many international observers thought might happen, Hamas is not acting like a responsible government. Instead, they are sticking to their roots as a terrorist organization, encouraging the sort of attacks that flared up in the recent violence.

Mr. Speaker, the international community needs to stand behind the State of Israel and support it as they defend themselves against terrorist attacks. I understand that tomorrow we are going to consider a resolution on the House floor that would express support for Israel and condemn the attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah, and I urge my colleagues in the strongest possible terms to vote for this resolution.

For the sake of the Israeli people and all residents of the region, I hope the current violence ends soon. But we must recognize Israel's right to defend itself and do what it must to end terrorist attacks against their soldiers and their people.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the letter referred to earlier.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2006.

Prime Minister MATTI VANHANEN,
President in Office, Council of the European Union, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

DEAR PRIME MINISTER VANHANEN: I am writing to express my strong disapproval of comments made by the European Union (EU) and individual member nations in reaction to Israel's response to terrorist attacks against them.

As you know, on June 25 members of the Hamas terrorist group attacked an Israeli military post in southern Israel, killing two Israeli soldiers and kidnapping another, Cpl. Galid Shalit. In response, Israel took actions to try to rescue Shalit, end attacks against its citizens, and hold the Palestinian Authority responsible. It is well-known that top Hamas leaders, including Ahmed Jaabari and Jamal Abu Samhadna, helped plan the attack on the Israeli post.

Later, on July 12, members of the Lebanese-based Hezbollah terrorist group attacked northern Israel, killing eight soldiers and kidnapping two others. These actions came despite the fact that UN Security Council Resolution 425 requires Lebanon to reestablish its authority in the southern portion of the country and to work towards international peace and security along its border with Israel. In response, Israel has imposed an air and sea blockade on Lebanon and sought to reduce Hezbollah's ability to attack Haifa and other Israeli population centers.

Despite the fact that Israel has exercised past restraint and is now acting in clear self-

defense to protect its people, the EU issued a statement criticizing Israel for a "disproportionate use of force"—comments echoed by French President Jacques Chirac and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. The EU also said that "the imposition of an air and sea blockade on Lebanon cannot be justified."

I find those comments to be misguided and unfair to Israel. In order to defend itself and its citizens from attacks on two sides, Israel has responded with the intent of ending the terrorist organizations' capacity to carry out further violence. The blockade is necessary to prevent further arms, military supplies, and terrorists from entering Lebanon and being used against Israel. It is widely known that Hezbollah has long been funded and aided by both Syria and Iran, and that assistance would continue during the violence if Israel were not to impose the blockade.

The United States has stood behind Israel and supported them as a democratic ally in a troubled region. It is disappointing to see that the EU does not seem to understand the need for Israel to defend itself against terrorist attacks.

I strongly urge you to reconsider your comments and instead issue a statement in support of Israel's right to defend itself.

Sincerely,

FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RAISING AWARENESS OF AND FUNDING FOR RADIO AL MAHABA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will take up H. Res. 784, a resolution I introduced that honors Radio Al Mahaba, an Iraqi radio station that offers the Middle East's only programming for women. The station began broadcasting on April 1, 2005, as an educational tool for the women of Iraq.

Historically, Iraqi women were extremely well educated, but the educational oppression brought on by Saddam Hussein led to the illiteracy rate for women rising to 75 percent. Saddam's regime drove women back to confinement and the extremists restricted them with harsh rules and practices, mostly imported from Iran and Saudi Arabia.

After Saddam was ousted, the women of Iraq needed some way to reach out to all women nationwide, to talk to them directly and provide help.

Bushra Jamil, an Iraqi who was living in Canada, saw this as an opportunity to empower the women of Iraq as it transitioned to a democracy. Bushra returned home and created Radio Al Mahaba.

Once the station began broadcasting, the response from Iraqi women was astonishing. Radio Al Mahaba programs